

Paradise House
Duke of Gloucester Street
Williamsburg
James City County
Virginia

HABS No. VA-189

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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORIC AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
District of Virginia

Historic American Buildings Survey

Prepared by Washington Office
for Southeast Unit

PARADISE HOUSE
Williamsburg, James City County, Virginia

Owner: Williamsburg Restoration

Date of erection: Mid eighteenth century

Builder: Philip Ludwell

Present condition: Good, restored

Description:

The design of the Paradise house has never been fully explained, and its present form does not seem to have been its intended one, but it certainly stands as completed. The peculiarity lies in the fact that it is two rooms deep on the first floor and only one on the second. The front part of the house is therefore two full stories high below a hipped roof, while the rear is one story below a shed roof, the latter being received against the rear wall of the main house. The building is of brick laid in Flemish bond with glazed headers. The water-table, string course, and flat arches of the window and door are of bright red gauged brick. A feature that makes it seem that the house was meant to be a full two-story structure like the Wythe house is that the string course is cut off, toward the rear of the side elevations, by the shed roof. That the rear was not two full stories at one time is made sure by the fact that the brickwork of the back of the two-story section is finished exterior brickwork and the main cornice is original.

The exterior of the Paradise house has suffered few important changes. The front is five bays with a center door. This is approached by a double flight of new steps in the style of the house. The doors and sash are also restorations. The front first-floor window openings were lowered about 1900 in order to get more sun in the rooms, as the sills were very high. These have now been restored to their original level. The main cornice is modillioned and the roof is a low hip. The chimneys are in the end walls of the two-story section and are off center to the rear. The interior possesses little original woodwork, the antique paneled room ends having been brought here from the vicinity of Petersburg.

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